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the space between the huts, neatly smeared with dung, separated off from the next by a low wall, sometimes less than a foot high, or the remains of what was once a wall. Not all villages give an appearance of neatness. Sometimes, especially after a rainy season, the huts are dilapidated and greatly in need of repair; courtyards may be untidy-looking and only partially smeared, while often in summer flies are a veritable pest. It is considered unlucky to kill them. Native ideas of cleanliness also differ from those of Europeans: it is considered nothing for a baby to urinate on the hut floor, while hours spent in smoky huts give the cloths and blankets worn by women an unpleasant odour. Each household, the domain of a married woman, is independent, having its own fields and granaries. The household of the chief wife is opposite the main entrance; on either side of her in Raselaka's village are her two fellow wives; further to her left are the households of an orphaned sister's son to the village head, married to one of his daughters, and of his eldest son, whose wife is still cooking for her mother-in-law and has as yet no cooking hut. To the right, beyond the third wife of Raselaka, lives a stranger, Letavula, with his wife and mother. There is an extra hut for the young boys of the village and one behind the rest belonging to a woman 'married' to the second wife of Raselaka. The Lovedu have no ranking of wives apart from the chief wife (the mother's brother's daughter) and there is no division of the village into right- and left-hand sides as among Zulu.

There are well marked differences even on the outside between cooking and sleeping or reception huts. The latter all face the *khoro* and have a wooden door; they are well plastered, many having a veranda all round. The former have their backs to the *khoro*, a framework of reeds as a door, and are more roughly made, very often unplastered on the outside, so that the framework of wooden posts is clearly visible. On entering a sleeping hut, you find yourself in a pleasing apartment. The floor, the greater portion of which is generally to the level of a foot higher than that of the entrance, is well smeared, while beside the wall are one or two raised platforms used to place things on and sometimes also as seats. The well-plastered walls merge into the roof, forming a white dome. This dome has circular rims marking the cross-laths which, beneath the plaster, hold together the framework of closely packed rafters. Sometimes there are mural decorations and at intervals an outjutting shelf of clay or a peg. The floor of the hut of Raselaka is empty except for a double or waisted basket (*khiruduswa*), a wooden platter of food, a lantern, and two smart suitcases. But on the shelves are blankets, a rolled-up sleeping-mat, some clothes and beadwork of the wife, and on the walls a calendar and a coloured picture of the King and Queen of England. You must not expect to find this latter sophistication in many villages, but likewise the smooth, plastered dome is now uncommon. New Government regulations against the cutting of trees for wood, and the men's general disinclination to put much work into a building they will inhabit only at intervals, between periods of service in the towns, are combining with other factors to doom to extinction these beautifully made huts. That of Letavula, newer than the others, is an ordinary *rondavel* with unplastered roof and supporting beams. He had a European bed, but has discarded it as too cold in winter.

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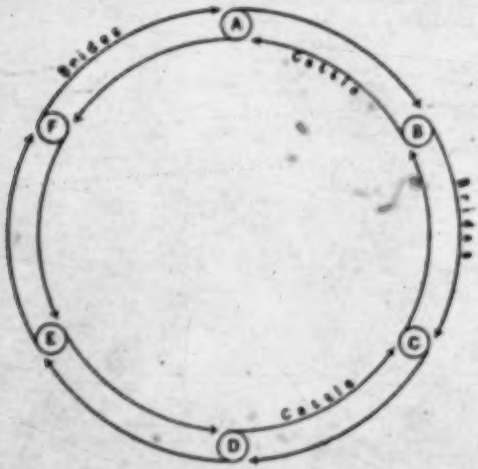
from a commercial transaction as is an engagement ring among us from buying a bride. It constitutes almost 54 per cent. of the total gift-barter economy, but also over 34 per cent. of the total exchanges in the tribe. In order to understand the Lovedu *munywalo* ring—we might almost borrow the name *kula* ring from Melanesia—we have to imagine a number of groups of people arranged in a circle. We have described the institution elsewhere[1] and merely repeat here what is necessary to understand its working. Each group consists of patrilineal relatives and, in the very simplest configuration, each is doubly linked to two other groups. Thus A is linked to both B and F: to B it owes brides and from



B it receives cattle; from F it receives brides and to F it owes cattle. B is cattle-obligated to A; A is bride-obligated to B. In the figure, brides pass clockwise round an outer circle and cattle move anti-clockwise along an inner concentric circle; the two circles cut through the groups A, B, C, D, E, and F, which are all both cattle-linked and bride-linked. In real life there are no concentric circles and so simple an arrangement is never found; even the general configuration of the groups is obscured by a hundred complications. A polygynist—and about one-third of the men have more than one wife—does not take all his wives from the same group. A man who uses his sister's marriage cattle must return a daughter to be the daughter-in-law of the sister or, in other words, the wife of the man's son; if he had used the cattle of two sisters whose husbands belong to different groups, his sons marry into these different groups. Endless new linkages and complications arise in this and in other ways. Essentially, however, the exchange pattern remains: one kind of valuable (cattle)

[1] Chap. ix. See also J. D. Krige, 'The Significance of Cattle Exchange in Lovedu Social Structure' *Africa*, vol. xii, no. 4.

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CHAPTER V

FAMILY TIES

Personal relations within the polygynous household—the sister as the centre of the social system—behaviour patterns and avoidances between potential and actual relatives-in-law and their modification by personality and adjustment—the position of orphans.

621 AT every turn we seem to be stumbling upon the kin. It cannot be otherwise, because they are very important in the everyday life and contacts of the Lovedu man or woman. The village is a group of relatives, chiefly on the father's side, but sometimes including one or two people from the side of the mother or wife, and even the district consists largely of kin. The modern tendency towards smaller and smaller villages has, in contrast to what one might have expected, hardly acted as a counteracting force, for so often a cluster of small villages, each with no more than two or three huts, turns out on closer inspection to represent what once was a single village. They have moved apart in space, but the ties are still recognized, sometimes even to the extent of acknowledging one man as their 'village' head. In our discussion of the district as a political unit, we refer to the manner in which kin and locality coincide. Suffice it here to say that in one district, with a large element of foreigners, 56 per cent. of the people are relatives of the district head. Of these, 36 per cent. are close relatives—that is, brothers, sisters, uncles—who would be recognized in modern European society, and 20 per cent. classificatory relations.[1] In many areas the percentage of relatives to the headman is much higher.

602 The Lovedu thus grows up in a circle of kin. As a child, his playmates are relatives; his boyish fights, loves, and hatreds involve his kin; and he grows old along with them. But blood-relationship does not act alone in binding people together. It does not determine the nature and strength of the contacts, the degrees of reciprocity that are to prevail. Here it is that other elements in the social structure step in, strengthening one type of link, perhaps at the expense of another just as close in degree, binding ever more closely certain of the kin and allowing others to drift apart. By means of complicated rights and duties between the individuals, these other elements tend, in different societies, to mould social relationships into different patterns, so that a father in one society has functions very different from those of a father in another, and a maternal uncle, in one society a man with authority over you, in another is perhaps a kind elderly playmate.

595 An important moulding force in Lovedu family relationships is polygyny. Each wife has her own household, her own fields and grain stores, but polygyny cannot stop at making plural wives independent in these ways; it must create special interrelations within its structure,

[1] The classificatory system of relationship, in which the terms 'brother' and 'sister' are extended to children of father's brothers and mother's sisters as well as other more distant relatives, and in which one has many 'fathers' and 'mothers', is too well known to require attention here.

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between husband and wives, between children of different wives, and between fellow wives. Polygyny, reinforced by the segregation of the sexes in everyday life and interests, renders the personal bond between husband and wife much less intimate than is the European ideal. Men are unwilling to spend much time in the company of women, and women prefer the company of their own sex. The polygynist must be most circumspect in his relations with his wives. He must treat them all with strict impartiality. Should he wish to give one a present, all must receive similar gifts. If he spends more time with one than another, this may be the cause of serious domestic discord. He must always be weighing and balancing lest preference shown to one should lead to trouble and unpleasantness. With such considerations uppermost, there is little chance of the development of companionship and communion between husband and wife, although there may be a high degree of co-operation and sympathy. It is generally only in his old age, when his wives have their own daughters-in-law and are already grandmothers, that a man allows himself the privilege of attaching himself openly to one of his wives, the one who has always treated him well. At this stage there is but little jealousy between the fellow wives, and a polygynous husband and one of his wives may sometimes in old age become a regular Darby and Joan. Where a man has one wife only and stays in his own small village without male companionship at home, their relationship becomes noticeably closer. This gain in intimacy is counterbalanced by a loss of independence on the part of the wife. Since there is now no need carefully to distinguish what belongs to the wife, the husband tends to take over most of the control, and the monogamous marriage of Christians, with its greater community of property between husband and wife, has thus its disadvantages as well as its merits.

A wife is expected to obey her husband, who may beat her if she does not; yet he may not interfere in her domestic arrangements. When a woman is busy (and she alone is the judge in this matter), her husband may have to wait till well after midday before receiving his first meal. She uses her own discretion in exchanging the produce of her fields, although she will generally not sell at a store without consulting her husband. Wife-beating is not uncommon, but it takes place usually when a man is drunk or suspects his wife of unfaithfulness. For an angry woman to attack her husband is not unusual and once considerable amusement was caused at a district head's court we attended when a man complained of being beaten by his wife.

It is the duty of a husband to make or buy clothes for his wife, build and repair her huts, provide her every year with storage receptacles and an enclosure for her harvest, and nowadays also to plough for her. Most men have one field of their own which they cultivate and, though they may ask their wives to help them with weeding and reaping, the produce is their own, used for beer-making or, in bad years, distributed among their wives. If his wife or any of his children is ill, a man must be unfailing in his efforts to find medicines or doctors that will provide a cure.

The position of a wife in her husband's home changes with the changing

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596 years. For the first few years of her married life she is strictly controlled by her mother-in-law, has a great deal of work to do, and finds little time to attend dances and beer-drinks. Nowhere was the position of a bride more forcefully brought to our notice than in the case of Anna. We met Anna first as an unmarried girl in her own home, a noisy, untidy, empty-headed girl never stirring a finger to help her brother's wife, who, though hampered by a peevish child of two, did all the housework. A year later when we met her again, this time as a bride of six months' standing, we could hardly believe the transformation that had taken place. Here was Anna, quietly doing all the work, waiting on us as guests, smearing the courtyard in the intervals between her other duties, and generally comporting herself in a manner which a year previously we should have thought impossible. Strictly speaking, there is no limit to the length of time a wife should cook for her mother-in-law. If she has married an only or the youngest son, she will continue doing so all her life; otherwise she is generally given her own hearth when the next brother marries and a new bride enters the household. If a bride does not get on well with her mother-in-law, she may, even if there is no other bride, be given her own hearth after a year or so, but in a family where all work harmoniously together, two daughters-in-law may be seen cooking in common for their husband's mother. Every woman can, however, look forward to an old age when she, too, will have her daughter-in-law to relieve her of the hard work she is unable to do.

593 595 A married woman moves about freely and goes to beer-drinks when she likes, but she would not go on a visit to her own people without consulting her husband or her mother-in-law. She may, if she is a doctor, own considerable property of her own in goats and cattle and, when her daughter gets married, she has a great deal to say in the disposal of the bride-price. Normally, the cattle coming in for a girl are used to obtain a wife for her uterine brother. If, however, there are more girls than boys, it is seldom that the mother will consent to its being used by the son of a fellow wife. In such a case it is usually given to the mother's brother, who, by using it, establishes a 'house' where the son of his niece will find a wife. Should the husband himself wish to obtain another wife with the cattle he will first have to come to an agreement with his wife, otherwise there may be a lot of trouble. Since a wife so obtained will have to cook for the wife whose daughter's cattle were used to obtain her, ill-feeling would lead to considerable disharmony and might end in breaking up the new marriage by causing the bride to run away.

595 The term for fellow wives, *vahadigani*, which the Lovedu translate as 'people who roast one another', is said to denote the state of tension and sometimes conflict that one finds between them. So bad does this become occasionally that one may find different wives of the same man living in different villages. Fellow wives may be jealous, yet they help one another in beer-making, lend each other utensils, work at each other's work-parties; and it is seldom that a woman gives her own child a tit-bit without also giving to other children that may be present. The chief wife, always the mother's brother's daughter, has no control over other wives. Where the chief wife is married only late in life, she is in

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practice often of less importance than the wife married first, and there is sometimes quite a conflict between the principles of age and legality.

Various factors, such as the household arrangements of the polygynous system, tend to make the tie between a mother and her own children, and more especially between mother and son, very strong and lasting. It is often possible to distinguish between the brothers in a polygynous household by the degree of resemblance in general nature and character to their mother. Children share any stigma that may be attached to their mother, and according as a man likes a wife so he likes her children. There is thus a high degree of solidarity between uterine brothers and sisters, who always like each other more than siblings by other wives. The attachment between Lovedu mother and child rests upon the firm foundations of a suckling period of several years, during which the child spends much of its time snugly strapped to her back. It is in many ways also an easier relationship than that among Europeans, with fewer prohibitions, fewer punishments and fewer of the petty grounds of conflict associated with such refinements as keeping hands or clothes clean.

The Lovedu girl is much with her mother, but she leaves home to get married soon after puberty and it is the boy in whose later life the mother plays the greatest role. During his boyhood the mother is the champion of her son. If he has been bullied by another, it is she who will take up the cudgels for him, and many of the worst quarrels between women arise in defence of their children. A boy of fifteen was pulling about and beating a boy of ten because he had not gone out to herd. Two men, in passing, called on him to desist, but to no avail till one of them said to a child standing near, 'Run and tell his mother Dwagu is killing her child.' The mother arrived and harangued Dwagu, who left off, but stoutly defended himself against her scolding tongue, and there the matter ended. When a young man marries, his mother is the dominating figure in his household. She controls his relations with his wife, telling him how to conduct himself while she is pregnant or during the suckling period, giving permission (indirectly through other old women) for their first sexual intercourse. When Masilu, a young man from town, came home ill, it was his mother who took him to a doctor. Ramano, after eight years absence in town, came home because his mother called him back; and Madume, a married man with two children, succeeded in avoiding a dangerous ritual office largely because his mother did not want him to undertake it. Even though he may be head of the village with authority over all its inmates, a man will still be constantly appealing to his mother's greater age and experience for guidance in matters that fall outside his own experience, more especially if his father is dead. Yet the mother, who so greatly controls her son, will never dare to have dealings with a stranger in the absence of the men nor presume to show him over the village. The son is the natural guardian of his mother. Should it be decided that she should move away from her husband's village, even if the cause be witchcraft, her sons will accompany her. Upon the youngest son, more particularly, falls the duty of caring for his parents in their old age.

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Within this general pattern, however, there can be infinite variations. Mulata beats his mother whenever he loses his temper and on one occasion severely wounded her with an axe. He is admittedly a bad lot and the talk of the neighbourhood, but such things do occur. Batamedi, who moved away from his brother's village and, as the youngest son, took his mother with him, did not provide her with blankets for the winter nor interfere when his wife shamefully neglected the old woman by visiting for months at her own home. So his mother betook herself back to her elder son, where she was accustomed to receiving better treatment.

The husband's mother, the grandmother of his children, is then an important person, an essential member of the individual household. She has much to do with the children; she it is who, for the first few months, feeds and baths the new baby. Having little to do, she tends the child while its mother is busy, and very often the young baby spends as much time strapped to its grandmother's back as to its mother's. Being old, the grandmother is mild in her treatment of the children, her policy being to pacify and placate rather than to force.

It is not easy to define the relationship between father and children. Because he spends most of his time with the men, there is little personal contact between father and young children, who in their turn are mostly in the company of those of their own age. A Lovedu child who lives in a large kraal may not see his father for days or speak to him for weeks. A girl has little to do with her father, but the boy finds that his father admonishes him or shows displeasure when he cries and on occasion inculcates manly values. The father keeps his distance, yet he becomes the personification of manly ideals, and a boy tries to be like his father. The father has authority, but his authority is never oppressive like that of European fathers, whose children live in much closer contact with them. If a boy has done wrong or let the cattle stray, he will avoid his father by not making an appearance at home till after dark. Dumedi spent two nights curled up in a sledge, afraid to appear at home lest his father should beat him for letting the goats stray. Fathers who wish to punish their sons are very often forced to resort to the plan of appearing at the entrance of the boys' sleeping hut long before dawn, there to round them up and beat them soundly before they have a chance of disappearing for the day! The father represents the polygynous family. Through him brothers by different mothers are linked and, not more than a few years back, fathers used sometimes to call their sons to sit with them at night. Then they would exhort the sons not to quarrel among themselves, to live together in peace, to be mutually helpful, and to behave as men. To-day, however, with the long absence of men in towns, this active education on the part of the father is rapidly disappearing.

Brothers by the same father, though not as closely linked as uterine brothers, nevertheless have certain responsibilities towards one another. They stand by each other in disputes and act in unison against outsiders. In claiming back bride-price for a deserting wife, a man will never act alone; he and his brothers will go together, showing a united front. If a man has to pay a fine and has no goat, his brothers will be expected to help him. When he dies, it is his brothers who will care for his widow

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children. Sometimes, in the absence of his brother in town, a man 595
be consulted by his brother's wife, but he has no real right over her.
a man to beat his brother's wife or order her about, as is said to be
case among Pondo, is quite unheard of. There is nothing special in
relationship between sisters, except that they may marry the same
and, for, quite apart from considerations of the sororate,
thought at all times good to marry sisters, who will be less liable
make quarrelsome fellow-wives than unrelated girls. Obligations
rds classificatory sisters and brothers, children of the mother's
r or father's brother, are not the same as those to brothers by the
father, and the tie is not nearly so close.

ovedu society is characterized by a very special relationship between 593
her and sister, a relationship that is given shape to and maintained 604
the Lovedu pattern of bride-price involving marriage with the 582
her's brother's daughter and supplemented by the role of women in
eligious system. With this are also bound up the close links between
groups of people, the *vamakhulu* and *vaduhulu*—a man's own people
those of his mother or wife. The linking of uterine brothers and
s in pairs, in order that the brother may obtain a wife with the cattle
ived for the sister, creates this special relationship between them and
es the man to send his daughter to marry at his sister's place. No
will accept a suitor for his daughter until he has ascertained whether
inked sister wants the girl or not, for though in general it is the sister's
who marries the girl, it is the sister who receives a bride to stamp for
and lessen the labours of her old age. The sister has, in fact, a legal
to the girl. If the girl were to run away or be married to some one
the court would support the father's sister's claim to the girl or the
n of the cattle her brother used. Legally, it is even possible for the
r to dissolve the marriage of her brother by demanding back these
e, but in practice this is rarely found. It is a common custom for a
al party to call in at the village of the sister, by means of whose cattle
ride has been obtained, 'to show her the girl who is to bear a bride
her son'. A goat will then be slaughtered by her husband for the
al party to show their pleasure in the marriage. A value that is
tantly being expressed in Lovedu society is that it is fitting and
rable for a girl to 'cook for' her father's sister.

he house of the brother is thought to have been created by the sister 593
se cattle made the marriage possible. That is why, when he builds
w village, it is the sister who has to draw the magic circle of protection [789]
ch renders it safe from witches. When the sister visits her old home,
in the house of this wife that she will 'put her things' and make
elf at home and, when she is called to beer, she will be given a special
in the house of this wife. The sister even wields a certain amount of
ority in the house of her brother, as was well illustrated at a gathering
ttended where the man of the house was quarrelling with his wife
t an uninvited guest. In the midst of the uproar a voice was heard:
is my village which I have built. I will have no unseemly behaviour
.' It was the sister rebuking her brother, who subsided immediately
went on with the ceremonial as if nothing had happened. So strong

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593 is the interest of a sister in the house established by her cattle that she may on occasion even exercise some control in her brother's choice of a wife. Dwagu wanted to marry Mabula, who was already married. His sister's husband then said, 'We shall not allow you to use my cattle to marry that woman. She will bring nothing but trouble.' If the wife obtained by means of the sister's cattle is badly treated by her husband, she may run to his sister, who will intervene on her behalf, or even in extreme cases arrange for her to live permanently away from her husband, who could then never claim a return of the bride-price from his wife's parents. Muhale, whom we knew well, had, under the influence of his second wife, chased away his chief wife, who ran to his sister. She advised the wife to make some pardon beer and take it as a peace-offering, but when he refused this his sister arranged for the woman to live with a widow in the village next door to her. Now, when Muhale's second wife quarrels and refuses to cook for him, he takes refuge with the wife he chased away till the storm is over!

The influence of a sister is reinforced by her religious position. At [782] the annual harvest offering to the gods, it is always the eldest sister in the family who has to officiate. She is the one best able to intercede with the spirits. Any displeasure or secret grievance against her brother on [753] her part may have the effect of stirring up the spirits to cause illness in his household, especially among his children (certain other relatives also have this power, but one hears most often of the sister). Hence it is said, 'The sister should roast pips; if she roasts the village [is angry] it will go up in flames' (*khadi e hadiga dithaga; ya hadiga mutse u ya swa*). Sometimes a sister may threaten her brother, saying, 'If I complain, nothing [428] will be good in your village.' On the death of the father, it is the eldest sister who, together with the father's brother, divides out the inheritance, and, at the only installation of a district head that we were able to witness, the emblems of office were handed over to the young heir's sister for him, though he was already in his twenties. In view of all these facts, a man's sister has great influence over him and may be called to remonstrate with him, more especially in matters affecting his own household when even his parents have been unsuccessful. But she has no right to interfere without just cause and, if she were to make needless trouble, her brother would very soon ask her to leave his village in peace.

Not all sisters play the role that has been ascribed in general terms to a man's sister. Though every sister is potentially priestess and guardian of her brother's household, in practice all these offices are seldom combined in one person. In religious ceremonies affecting the family as a whole, the eldest daughter of the chief wife would officiate; in case of illness, a man's uterine sister might be asked to officiate. If the sister whose cattle has been used is younger than her brother, she may have little influence as compared with her elder sister; furthermore, where the sister is a woman of no personality, her influence may be negligible. It is a man's uterine sisters that play the biggest part in his life, for in this, 605 as in everything, the individual family is always asserting itself as against ● 595 the larger, polygynous family group. A classificatory sister, one by the mother's sister or father's brother, or one by a wife of the father other

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than the chief wife, plays little part in a man's life; she is merely a female relative to whom a certain amount of respect and attachment is due. Often a woman's son marries daughters of several of her brothers. It is, however, only to the daughter of that brother who used her cattle that she has a right—has, as the Lovedu put it, an 'entrance' to his village.

In view of the position of sisters and brothers later in life, one would not expect great familiarity or freedom between them during their childhood. Brother and sister may talk freely to each other, but if they rollick together their parents will stop them. Hence the riddle, 'What is it that is at hand and yet beyond reach?' (*Kha ntsita khi e mai*) The answer, 'The breast of my sister,' refers to the playful catching hold of the breasts of girls by young boys, which is taboo in case of a sister. In strong contrast to the free, yet proper, relationship between brother and sister stands the joking relationship between cross-cousins. Derived from the brother-sister relationship is that of the father's sister, who is accorded honour and respect by the children of the house she has established. The term *khadi* is used loosely to denote either father's sister or eldest sister, for it is the eldest sister who will take over the religious functions of the father's sister after her death.

A well-marked characteristic of Lovedu society, one that clearly distinguishes it from the strictly patrilineal Zulu, Xhosa, and Pondo, is the importance of the mother's side of the family. Nothing of interest or importance takes place without their presence; even at the annual harvest beer offerings given to the gods on the father's side, relatives on the mother's side, who are not concerned in the religious aspect of the ceremony, will be present for the beer and social amenities. Important in maintaining close links between a man and his mother's relatives are the bonds of interdependence between the families of a brother, and the sister whose cattle he used. The sister's son is a potential son-in-law, who will be accorded great honour in the household of his mother's brother. A man's mother may also be the *khadi* who has to go and make offerings in the mother's brother's household, and in her absence her son might officiate for her. Later, when a man is engaged to his mother's brother's daughter, there will be gifts of beer from the girl's family. They are thus bound together by a variety of links.

But the greatest of all bonds between a man and his mother's side of the family is conceived by the Lovedu to be one of love. There is a saying, usually quoted by women, '*Wa mma u sme; wa rare gi mabakataka*,' which, freely translated, means, 'Love lies on the mother's side of the family; ownership on the father's'. One's relationship with the mother's side of the family is modelled on that towards a mother and is much influenced by the petting and spoiling received at the hands of the maternal grandmother, with whom most children spend a few years of their life, generally soon after the birth of a younger brother or sister. Every child recalls with delight the good time he had when at his mother's brother's village with his mother's mother; how she treated him to tit-bits, how she scolded or beat only her son's children if her grandchildren quarrelled and fought. For, it is said, a woman loves her daughter's children (who only come on visits) far more than those of her

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kinship terminology and behaviour patterns, because they effectively operate only within narrow limits and are unsupported by tangible reciprocities beyond these limits—though distant relationship is spoken of as a 'flavour that is familiar' (*ledugɬa*, literally, a salty taste)—cannot hold together widely spread groups without assistance from other social arrangements. And this is precisely where the complex of kin segregated out by the cattle plays its decisive part. In generation after generation the links are renewed as grandfathers, fathers, sons, and grandsons all take their chief wives from and send their cattle to the same group. The bridegrooms not only give the cattle, they are perpetually giving all their lives, assisting the group of the brides in paying their debts and helping its male members with *munywalo* and in a hundred other ways; on the other hand, the brides or parents-in-law must always honour the bridegrooms and must maintain relationship with them by periodically bringing beer. These reciprocal obligations are at the very basis of the social system, of the interrelations between villages, of the bonds between the districts, and, finally, of the vast and intricate system that binds the nuclear group to the other groups and to the districts. If the lineages are the bricks out of which the society is constructed, the *mulɔgɔ* and particularly the cattle-relatives (*mulɔgɔ wa dikhomu*) constitute the straw and the mortar, even the steel framework. It is also within the grouping brought about by these cattle that the fiercest conflicts occur. The price that is paid for a system, without which the fundamental structure and interrelations of the society might crumble to the ground, is certainly great; but in view of the functions of this system, it is perhaps not too great.

The *munywalo* system is also closely associated with the hierarchy of rank within the household. For the chief house of a polygynist is the house established by the cattle he received from the marriage of his sister; and at the same time the mistress of this house is his cattle-linked cross-cousin. The rewards of rank thus support the *munywalo* system. But rank reckoned in this way is not completely co-ordinated with seniority and other arrangements in the society. Some of the conflicts that arise are mentioned elsewhere. Here we shall refer briefly to social groupings based upon age. Firstly, there are age-mates (*thaga*). Girls, on the one hand, and boys, on the other, from an early age club together in their games and their activities. The group is a very loose one, wholly unorganized from without; it is not unlike our play gangs. Techniques of co-operation and group cohesion are well developed, especially among herdboys. They have their games, their heroes, and their bullies; their loyalties are, in a sense, in conflict with adults, but they are not anti-social. They may not tell tales out of school; if they do, adults will dismiss the matter as nonsense. Girls bathe together, get firewood together, play and stamp mealies together. They know one another's love affairs, they share one another's troubles. This group of age-mates is purely localized; it does not extend beyond the district and is often confined to a few neighbouring villages. In later life these age-mates continue to be on friendly, even intimate and joking terms—that is, as far as such is possible when they are also relatives. Among girls especially,

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home a second wife until his first has had a child or, more usually to-day, until she is pregnant; and he has to avoid his wife to some extent until the baby is weaned, a period of three years or even more. 837

If a wife is barren, a substitute may, as we have seen, be sent. The whole subject of substitution is too large for adequate treatment here, but some aspects of it may be mentioned. Among the Lovedu a man may marry two sisters in the ordinary course of events, quite irrespective of whether the first married has prematurely died or is barren, but the wife's sister is not specially reserved for the husband as if he had a prior right to her. The marriage is desirable, not enjoined by the society, when it is known that the sisters will co-operate and care for each other's children. In the case of barrenness, there is substitution, but the substitute wife is not a subservient wife. It is not a case of true substitution, but a strengthening of a weak link in the chain of bride and cattle exchanges. A barren wife cannot be discarded; on the contrary, the insistence upon treating her well, though it recognizes, also represses the tendency to regard her position with misgivings. Men make a great effort, by treating a barren wife well, to elicit the praise of others, especially the queen, whose continuous interest is a guarantee that the virtue will be idealized. There are other considerations that reinforce the great concern of a female ruler for peacefulness and good relations. A man who ill-treats his barren wife need expect no reciprocity from her parents, and he has no weapons against them. He cannot demand back his cattle, for failure to have children does not vitiate the cattle exchanges. He cannot even initiate the procedure whereby his parents-in-law will send him a substitute. On the contrary, he must await their pleasure and if they do decide to send a substitute, he must *nywala* (give cattle), and he may be asked more *munywalo* than for her sister. But if he has been a good husband and is poor, less may be asked. A man realizes that the virtue of treating a barren wife well is richly rewarded. 842 595

Similarly, a husband whose wife has died prematurely without issue is in the same position: he has no right to demand a substitute or, in default, the return of the *munywalo*. When he is offered his wife's sister or other suitable substitute, he must hand over cattle for her. It is true that the substitute sets up the house that 'has fallen', but the really important point is that the relationship created by the cattle exchanges should be maintained. A husband must report the death of his wife with an ox; he must call her people to the ceremony ending the mourning period; he must continue his visits as son-in-law; he must always be prepared to help his parents-in-law. All this will not necessarily induce them to give him a substitute; and if he neglects these things, the potential right to such substitute is not effaced. On the other hand, his parents-in-law must continue to honour him when he visits, they must still send him beer, they must acknowledge relationship with him. If they do not do these things, if they spread tales that he has been the cause of the death of their daughter, the relationship may be broken; and consequently the claim to a substitute, non-existent before, now is given recognition. If they value the link broken by their conduct they must reforge it by sending a substitute; if they do not, their action has already caused it to snap 587 768

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is not primarily conceived of as raising seed; his main duty is to care for her and to maintain intact the *munywalo* scheme.

The economic aspect of marriage is more important than the sexual. The duty of a niece to marry at her cattle-linked aunt's [illegible]phrased as an economic obligation. A wife has power because she is the provider of food. There are many other sources of the influence of an old woman, both over her son and her son's wife, and they have economic implications. Nagambi, a man of thirty-five, scorned to bow to his wife's wishes except when she was possessed; yet the wishes of his mother dictated when he should go to town or return home, what land he should plough and when, what medicines or doctors he should get for his baby. The apparent helplessness of women when a stranger calls and asks for information or wishes to do business is not wholly assumed, for theoretically business and politics are the affairs of the men; but often enough it is convenient to defer to the men and to exercise a woman's influence behind the scenes. Thrift and industry are the virtues valued in a wife; it is the hard-working girl who is coveted as a bride. For that reason also, a faithful concubine (*mugaula*) has in practice a high status.

Madume's brother had both a wife and a *mugaula*, and when he died the *mugaula* took all his property for her son. Madume, who denied her right to do this, brought an action and the case eventually came to the capital. The court wholly ignored the issue as to whether a *mugaula* had legal rights. It contented itself with urging the *mugaula* to give Madume control of the assets which had accrued from the work of his brother's son, warning Madume not to press his case. 'Did not the *mugaula* cook and work long for your brother?' it asked. 'And was it not due to her thrift that there are goods? You are wrong to worry her.' Unions with concubines are often stable and economically satisfactory. Quarrels, even jealousies, between a man and his *mugaula* sometimes come before the courts, just as if they were disturbances within a family. Muhale complained, not that his son was living with a *mugaula*, but that the *mugaula's* laziness had prevented him from giving a beer-drink for a whole year. When the jealousy of the *mugaula* threatened domestic trouble, the queen considered the matter important enough to send a messenger, who, with the district head, came to settle the dispute; the court dealt with the matter exactly as if the parties were married, urging mutual forbearance and co-operation. A man who illicitly lives upon a woman, eating from her porridge bowls (*madilo*), acquires no rights over her or her children, and is derisively called 'father of the porridge bowls' (*ramadilo*).

Instead of attempting to deal with the conflicts and tangles in *munywalo* and marriage, we shall refer to a few of their aspects merely. The conditioning of cross-cousins for their obligations as marital partners does not eliminate temperamental differences, and in modern conditions, which emphasize individual acquisitiveness as against reciprocity, the burden of obligations in the *munywalo* ring becomes too heavy. A father, more intent upon the polygynous circle of huts than upon maintaining the chain of *munywalo* exchanges, may use the cattle coming in from his daughter's marriage to acquire a wife for himself; and an almost

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578 unmanageable complication arises, unless there is agreement between all the persons interested: the son to whom the cattle should have been allotted, the daughter from whose marriage they came, the house established by these cattle, and the father himself. Tensions arise in many other ways: neglect of one wife and favouritism of another in respect of economic services, interference with the independence of the houses, and so on. Unwillingness to co-operate in the home and in fulfilling the wider group obligations is a more potent cause of trouble than adultery; and witchcraft, except as a symptom of tensions otherwise created, takes a minor place; and neither adultery nor witchcraft as such can snap the *munywalo* bonds.

426 The character of these tensions may be briefly illustrated by the case
● 595 of Muvirwa and Mara. Faced with starvation, Mara obtained cattle
684 from Muvirwa (who was a friend, not a relative), promising, in accordance with the 'mud-stamper' institution, a daughter in exchange. In fact, this daughter, the little 'mud-stamper', as she is called, because she is too young to stamp mealies, was not yet in existence. That is not unusual in these transactions, which require that the 'mud-stamper' shall in due course be given gratuitously to the benefactor; and thereby the two lineages become cattle-linked, so that, for instance, Mara and his descendants would have to offer brides and receive cattle and Muvirwa and his descendants would offer cattle and receive brides. If Mara had no brides to offer, Muvirwa would still have to give cattle; otherwise the link might be broken. The 'mud-stamper', after reaching years of discretion, may dislike the benefactor, who is usually already old and decrepit, and that may lead to conflicts. In this instance, when Mara's daughter entered her *khoba* initiation, Muvirwa, as is customary, paid the *levala* goat, for a bridegroom for whom a bride is 'born' must, so to speak, nurse her and 'grow' her. Not long afterwards the 'mud-stamper' died. Mara offered another daughter and, as the girl had died before actual marriage, no further *munywalo* was required from Muvirwa. But the substitute, having grown up, married and then deserted Muvirwa, who was already very old; she ran away to a lover, Mara himself conniving at the desertion. Mara returned some cattle to Muvirwa, thereby severing the relationship, and promised the balance when the lover had paid *munywalo*.

684 Years passed and nothing happened. Muvirwa eventually brought an action, which Magsebia, Mara's wife, contested. She said that on the death of the 'mud-stamper' she had offered to return the cattle, but this was refused, that the substitute was forced to marry Muvirwa against her will, and that the religious ceremony was omitted. Muvirwa replied that he had already received seventeen of the twenty-four cattle (the number to which the original eight had increased), that it was thus not he who had broken the relationship, and that the religious ceremony, which for various reasons could not be held in Mara's village, had taken place at the village of Magsebia's brother. The court could not but side with Mara, but it tried hard to reduce his claim, for twenty-four cattle, it said, were an enormous number. Then recriminations broke out between Mara and his wife, which revealed a many-sided conflict in the

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illustrated in a proverb the sense of which is that you may be the unsuspecting victim of the witchcraft of your closest friend, or, more literally, Bɛlɛgwane, the enemy, does not care; [so intimate with him are you that] you eat with him, [yet] he is the foe that eats you (*Bɛlɛgwane mulala a khi wone; u la nayɔ, gi mulala was hu la wɛna*). And people chased away as witches from one area or tribe never have any difficulty in being accepted into another.

Considerations such as the return of cattle are often strong enough to deter a man from chasing away a wife who has bewitched some one in the village (he would never chase away a wife merely for bewitching outsiders). When once we asked a man why he kept a wife who had been found guilty of bewitching her fellow wife, he replied, 'She is my witch' (*gi mulɔi wa ga*). Being fond of her, he merely built her a separate village. Some people who have never been publicly accused of witchcraft are nevertheless known to be bad witches. In such cases, people may fear them and try to keep on good terms with them in order to avoid evil consequences.

One of the most fruitful studies in regard to witchcraft is the investigation of the relationship of the people who bewitch one another. Two main categories must be distinguished, viz. cases in which relatives bewitch one another and cases in which the evil is sent by non-relatives. The Lovedu maintain, and the opinion is borne out both by one's general impressions and by the facts, that witches injure mainly those with whom they are in close contact—that is, relatives and neighbours—and that it is difficult to bewitch a stranger. And it is remarkable that of fifty cases of witchcraft observed by us as they came before the *khɔrɔ* and given in the table below, 70 per cent. involve close relatives. Not all relatives are apt to bewitch one, but both men and women are equally liable to harm either men or women. A mother never, it is believed, bewitches her own children, and there is even a saying to the effect that a *mugɔme* who points out one's mother is not able to divine (*mugɔme u a tia vummahu a u khɔni hu laula*); and, although brother and cattle-linked sister sometimes hate one another, openly as well as secretly, they cannot harm one another, it is said, because they would use 'the medicine bag of the [same] mother'. Similarly neither a son nor a daughter can bewitch the mother.

The most prolific single source of witchcraft is the conflict of co-wives (24 per cent. of all cases). Their relationship in the polygynous family is a difficult one; the houses are independent, not subservient to one another, yet they are in close contact, and the insistence upon compromises occasions many mental conflicts. Spouses also bewitch one another, but wives kill or injure their husbands more frequently than husbands kill their wives; it is said that a husband who has only one wife will never bewitch her, except perhaps among Christians, who can have only one wife. The conflict of spouses is an aspect of a wider institutional conflict, that between relatives-in-law. If they have irksome obligations towards one another, the society insists that their relationship shall be characterized by mutual respect and helpfulness and that their difficulties, especially *masymalo* difficulties, are to be resolved as far as possible by the methods and procedure of the *khɔrɔ*. These factors explain why,

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754 578 despite the many sources of tension between them, the cases are not, as one might expect, overwhelmingly predominant: only 20 per cent. of the total given in our table are cases of wives or their relatives bewitching husbands or their relatives, and only 16 per cent. husbands or their relatives bewitching wives or their relatives.

What is even more arresting is the fact that easily aggrieved relatives who, as it is phrased, are 'very sensitive' and readily nurse grievances, never or rarely bewitch: such are cattle-linked brothers or sisters, father's sisters, fathers, father's brothers and grandparents. It is even clear from what we have already said that they are believed to have repressed complaints, but they cannot project as witchcraft the displeasures or misfortunes or failures upon those who must, but do not, respect and humour them. They can and do cause illness, but it is not by way of witchcraft, and the resolution of the conflict is by pardon and *ku phasa*, through the gods, not through *vubi*. In other words, witchcraft is a reflection, not of tensions as such, whether open or repressed, but of tensions within the framework of cultural mechanisms for avoiding their being projected as witchcraft. They must be studied in the whole configuration of institutions and social values: the permissible or approved remedies, the interposition of the hierarchy of age and rank between competing individuals, the compromises and reconciliations that are insisted upon, and the extent to which mental drives are conditioned to the cultural pattern or allowed outlets or are blocked by culturally stressed values.

The incidence of witchcraft between strangers is much more intelligible to us, because it arises in situations of conflict that are not very different from our own. But the percentage of these cases (30 per cent.), even when we include the 10 per cent. of cases between distant kin who are neighbours rather than relatives, shows how largely the social structure is built upon the kin.

754 578 595 The following table represents a very broad analysis of fifty cases of witchcraft that we observed as they came before the *khoro* and that may be simplified for statistical presentation:

Category of conflict	Witch(es)	Victim(s)	No. of cases	Remarks as to nature of conflict	Percentage of cases
I. *Relatives* (*a*) House or co-wife against house or co-wife	Co-wife	Co-wife	1	Jealousy about lovers; neglect by husband	
	Co-wife	Co-wife and child of co-wife	2	Jealousy about children and husband's attention	
	Co-wife	Child of co-wife	2	Disagreements about *manyanalo*	

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Category of conflict	Witch(es)	Victim(s)	No. of cases	Remarks as to nature of conflict	Percentage of cases
I. *Relatives* (*a*) House or co-wife against house or co-wife—*cont.*	Co-wife and her mother	Co-wife's child	2	Favouritism of husband and other mixed motives	
	Inherited wife	Co-wife and her children	2	Use of cattle of one house by another and questions of prestige	
	Widow	Fellow widow's child	1	Property arrangements	
	Wife of brother	Wife of another brother	1	Complex jealousies	
	Son of co-wife	Chief son and his wife	1	Status and position	24
(*b*) Wife against husband	Wife	Husband	2	Friction, favouritism of other wives, position	
	Wife and/or wife's mother	Husband's adulterine child or lover	4	Sexual jealousy and neglect of wife	
	Wife	Husband's sister's child	1	Disagreement about marriage of children and *munyuale*	
	Wife	Husband's brother, his wife, or his child	2	Position, jealousy	
	Wife's mother	Husband's child	1	Disagreements	20

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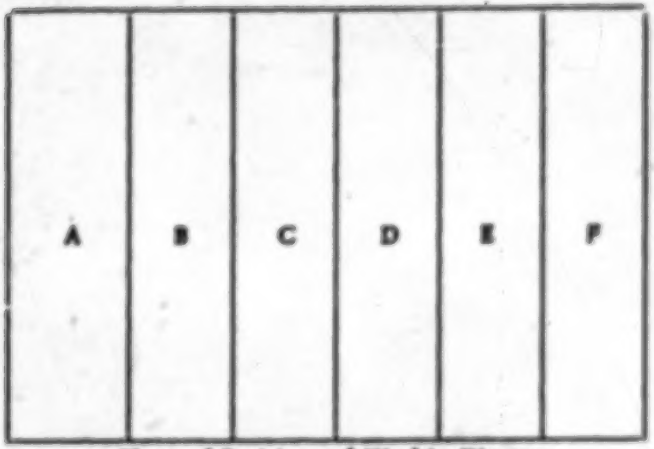

Chart of Positions of Kinship Diagram.
[This chart refers to the contents of Appendix I of the text, found on pp. 193-196. See category 116.--Analyst]
[Facing kinship diagram.]

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ships between the families involved but upon it rests the whole character of the domestic group. Payment of bride-price transfers the reproductive powers of the woman to the husband's agnatic group. The husband has genetricial as well as uxorial rights. Genetricial rights apply not only to any children born after the marriage whoever their biological father might be, but also in retrospect, so that any child born before marriage automatically becomes the child of whoever pays the bride-price, with full rights of succession and inheritance from its sociological father. There is thus, in contrast to other tribes such as the Zulu, no way in which a Lobedu man can obtain the right to his biological child other than by marrying its mother. Emphasis on sociological as opposed to biological fatherhood among the Lobedu is very strong and this is an important factor in Lobedu social structure. The rights of a father to a child involve control over it; the right to the bride-price of a daughter (subject to the right of her brother to marry with his sister's cattle and of her mother to the services of the woman married with her daughter's bride-price); and corresponding to his right to his daughter's bride-price the duty to help his son to marry. A father may and often does marry an additional wife with his daughter's bride-price. A father also has the right to be cared for in his old age by his sons.

The levirate is practised, the junior levirate being more common than the senior levirate. The brother raises seed to the deceased and takes over the responsibility of a father and husband though the children he begets are counted as belonging to his deceased brother. Frequently the heir, eldest son of the chief 'house' inherits a young wife of his father. In this case, similarly, the children born of the union are looked upon as the deceased's, i.e., as brothers and sisters of the heir, not his children. The sororate also is practised in all its forms, sororal polygyny being very common. Where a sister is sent to 'awaken the house (*ho dzusa ndu*)' of a barren or deceased wife full bride-price is due for her although, since bride-price is never an absolutely fixed amount, less may be asked for than in the first marriage.

The marriage of a woman transfers to her husband's group the right to her labour. Initially it is the husband's mother even more than the husband himself that benefits, as we shall

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and married Nakampe (G), Mogodo's son by another wife. Makeakati's (C's) 'house' had first claim on the daughter of the man (her father's brother) who had used her cattle, but as her son was a Christian the girl was given to the son of a different 'house'.

Once a link has been created by a marriage a bride-giving-bride-receiving relationship follows, which tends to be reinforced not only by one but by numerous subsequent marriages. Thus, A married a girl from lineage B. Both his sons and his grandson followed in his footsteps (see Figure 4).

The same tendency is present in Lobedu polygyny where the sororate is very popular. Most Lobedu who are not Christians have more than one wife. But it will almost always be found

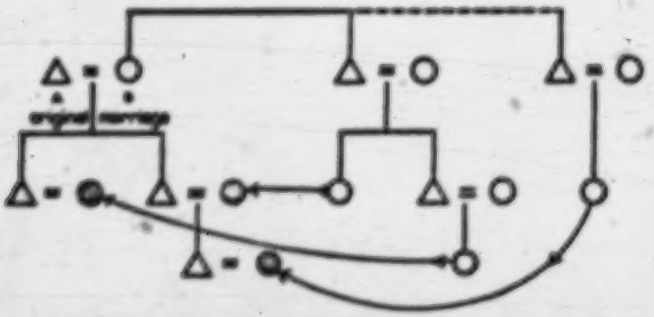

FIG. 4. *Reinforcement down the generations of a marriage link between two lineages.*

that at least one is a sister or younger relative of one of the other wives. Thus M, a chief councillor, married seven wives: (1) his mother's uterine brother's daughter; (2) his mother's half-brother's daughter; (3) his mother's half-brother's daughter's son's daughter; (4) a non-relative; (5) a non-relative; (6) his mother's brother's son's daughter (brother's daughter to No. 2 and therefore a wife's brother's daughter); (7) a sister to (1) by the same father but a different mother.

S, a man in his thirties, has three wives: (1) his mother's mother's brother's daughter; (2) a non-relative and (3) the uterine sister of his first wife.

Old K had five wives: (1) his mother's uterine brother's

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daughter; (2) his father's mother's brother's daughter; (3) a distant relative of his mother's; (4) his mother's fellow-wife's brother's daughter; (5) a sister to his first wife by the same father but a different mother.

Divorce

The use of a woman's bride-price by her brother, and the interest which his cattle-linked sister has in maintaining this 'house' in which her son will find a wife, made divorce difficult in the old days. Today, however, partly owing to migrant labour, divorce is more common and girls, especially in the case of arranged marriages with old men or cross-cousins, quite frequently run away to a lover either before or after the marriage knowing that they cannot any longer be forced to return. A return of the bride-price is not always insisted upon, as in the case of A who chased away his childless wife for being a thief. Her brother had used the cattle so A was satisfied to accept the arrangement that the brother should give his daughter in marriage to A's son by another wife. When there are complicated cattle claims a husband, especially if he is already old, may find it wiser not to press for a divorce if a wife absconds. P's third wife, who had been procured with the bride-price of the daughter of his first wife ran home with her three children and began to lead a promiscuous life during which a fourth child was born. Beyond trying to persuade her people to make her return, P did nothing. The children, two girls and two boys, were his and his first wife had a claim on the bride-price of one of the girls. Eventually, when the two daughters were married, P secured their bride-price; the two sons earned their own marriage-cattle by working; and when P died, the eldest son of that 'house' was called to come and receive his share of the inheritance.

The rule in Lobedu divorce was, in the old days, that the husband's family should receive back the full bride-price plus all increase, irrespective of where the blame lay, in accordance with the saying, '*monna mabe o boya le mabe a kae*—even the bad workman (husband) returns with his tools'. The children went with their mother to her people and when she remarried, the new husband had a right to all of them. With European

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administration came the introduction of the Pedi idea that a man has a claim to both the cattle and the children in the case of malicious desertion. Old men in the 1930's called this a white man's law; today people are claiming it as a Lobedu custom. Only two of the oldest men at court were able to tell me in 1962 what had been common knowledge in 1936. The present custom is for the husband on receiving back the bride-price to return some of it (one beast for each child or sometimes two for a girl) for the rearing of the younger children that remain temporarily with their mother. A father's hold over such children is in practice tenuous though the court will always uphold his claims.

The issues in divorce are rarely simple. The simplest case I came across was one in which a man became insane. His wife left with her children to live with her brother who returned the bride-price. Usually, however, there are endless complications and cases continue for months, even years. If, for example, a man chases his wife and children away and the wife wants to return, he may in the end lose both the children and the bride-price despite the proverb quoted above.

The Domestic Group and the Importance of the 'House'

We have discussed the role of property in establishing and maintaining marriage relationships and links between families. Control over material resources also plays an important part in the structure of the polygynous domestic group with its economically independent 'houses' so characteristic of the Lobedu.

As head of the family the husband has full control over all family resources. Yet each wife forms with her children a unit of production and consumption, the independence of which as against other 'houses' has to be respected even by the husband, whose control thus becomes limited the moment he marries a second wife. This is why a Christian woman among the Lobedu never has the economic independence that a woman in a polygynous household has. There are safeguards against the infringement of the principle of the independence of the 'house', as we shall see.

Though women do most of the cultivation, the Lobedu

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LOBEDU PROPERTY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Though women do most of the cultivation, the Lobedu husband is expected to play his part in producing food for his family. Every married man, therefore, has a field of his own which he cultivates with the help of his wives. The produce of this field is used for any beer- or work-parties that the man may wish to give and is a kind of bank upon which his wives may draw when they run short. If, however, a man helps one wife from his personal stores he must give all his wives an equal amount irrespective of their needs. When he first marries, the husband works with his wife in their common field. On marrying a second wife he acquires a field of his own (in addition to the one for his new wife) which his wives take it in turn to weed. It is said that if he had no field of his own but were merely to help each wife in turn to cultivate her field there would be endless trouble in maintaining equality between them. One of them for instance might say, 'How is it that when you come and work in my field you just sit but when you go to the field of the mother of So and So even the shade doesn't tempt you!'

A father is responsible for helping his sons to marry. But since a man seldom possesses cattle other than those already involved in bride-price exchange and a son uses the cattle of his sister, boys in a 'house' in which there are no girls often have to go out and work or with the help and advice of their father acquire bride-price in other ways. In the old days an orphan usually hired out his services to carry salt or iron ore from far countries in order in this way to acquire marriage hoes or cattle. Expenses in goats and money over and above the cattle given in marriage are met by the boy himself with the help of his father. A father should see to it that his son is provided with a field when he marries but in practice it is very often the mother who concerns herself with this problem. The father has jural control over his sons and is responsible for their debts.

The wives in a polygynous household differ in status. The chief wife is the daughter of the mother's brother—the cattle-linked or any uterine mother's brother or mother's half-brother. She will bear the heir and future head of the village. Where there has been no marriage with the mother's brother's daughter it is the first wife, the one married with his father's cattle that is chief wife. A chief wife exercises no control over

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other wives. When the mother's brother's daughter is one of the younger wives in a polygynous household she may be completely overshadowed by the first wife. The eldest son of the first wife occupies a position of importance in the family. He is said to stand in the shoes (literally 'footprints') of his father and after the latter's death has a right to be *suma'd*, i.e., given a portion of any animal killed by any of his brothers long after they have dispersed and live in separate homesteads. There are instances, especially in the case of district heads and where the chief house has no male heir, in which the eldest son of the first wife married tries to usurp the position. But though he may appear for a time to be succeeding as seemed to be the case in more than one instance in the 1930's when first we went into the field, I have not come across any cases in which he has succeeded in the long run.

Each wife has her own fields which it is her duty to cultivate for the needs of her 'house'. On her death her sons have first right to inherit her fields unless their father wants to use them himself or arrange for their cultivation to provide food for the younger children; but they may not be used for the benefit of any other 'house'. A daughter may be given her deceased mother's field to cultivate while she is still in her parental home, but she cannot inherit it. A wife is expected to feed herself, her children, her husband and her mother-in-law from her fields. Each time she cooks she sends food to her husband and to his mother. What is left must be returned to her 'house' unless the husband himself gives it to the herd-boys or other children as a group. In the case of special dishes eaten in-between meals, such as cakes of sesamum or ground peanuts, a little will be sent to each of the other women of the homestead with whom *she wife is* on good terms. In a large homestead this may be confined to the wives of one man. Beer brought to any one 'house' is usually drunk by all in the village and neighbourhood.

In addition to having her own granaries and cooking utensils every wife has a right to raise livestock. She may keep chickens; she may acquire goats by the exchange of her produce; she may get pigs by feeding other people's pigs in return for a pigling. She may even acquire cattle if she is a doctor. In contrast to the Zulu, where the 'house' like that of the Lobedu is

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938, 1961-1962) 1964
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also an economic unit, the Lobedu wife enjoys considerable economic freedom in the disposal of her property. Though she should act in consultation with her husband in the disposal of livestock or large amounts of surplus crops she will often, especially if on bad terms with her husband, act on her own. All these activities, it should however be remembered, are for the advancement of her 'house', which belongs to the husband's lineage. These goods can neither accrue to nor be used by the wife's own relatives. If, for example, she leaves her husband or is divorced she cannot take any of the produce of her fields with her. On the other hand the husband could use such crops or livestock only for the advancement or to feed the children of that 'house,' not for other 'houses'. The only goods a woman may take with her on divorce are cattle or other livestock earned by practising as a doctor because in this case, it is said, she has spirits guiding her which are of her own, not her husband's family.

The Lobedu husband does not in the manner of the Nguni allocate cattle to the 'house' of each wife (milk plays little or no part in the diet). It is said, however, that even if a cow were to be allocated to a house for milking purposes it would not belong to that 'house'. Cattle that come in from the marriage of a daughter are the property of her mother's 'house' and should be used for acquiring a wife for a son of that house. If the son is young and the husband wishes to use his daughter's cattle for a wife for himself, such wife would have to cook for the woman of that house from which the cattle came in the manner of a daughter-in-law. In theory a husband has the right to decide how the cattle of any 'house' are to be used. But he rarely in practice acts against the wishes of the wife. Her right over any woman acquired by the cattle of her daughter gives her great power and makes it difficult for her husband to marry a wife with them himself against her wishes. The bride might run away or her people refuse to let her marry if they hear that the woman the bride will have to 'stamp for' opposes the marriage. That is why so often cattle are handed to the wife's brother in the manner described above.

It is said, '*matsha ha o le yo mangwe*—houses do not eat one another', i.e., the property of one house cannot be used for the advancement of another. Hence bride-price of the girl of one

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938,1961-1962) 1964
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house should not be used by the son of another house. If this is done (as it sometimes is if one wife has only daughters and another only sons) this immediately establishes a new relationship between half-brother and sister who now become cattle-linked; and the girl whose cattle were used has the right to 'follow the tracks of her cattle' to ask for a daughter-in-law from that 'house'.

A 'house' is never wholly dependent in economic matters on the husband and his lineage. It has other possible sources to exploit. Thus a married woman may, and often does, get fields from her own people to cultivate. The difference between these fields and those given by her husband's people is that the latter are hers as a right and are inherited by her sons; the former she obtains through the goodwill of her blood-kin and on her death they revert back to them unless the children are still young and the fields are needed to feed them. Similarly, though it is the father's duty and responsibility to help his sons to marry and though uterine brothers always help one another, a man who has a married sister very often turns to her husband or to the sister's son for help with cattle to marry a wife. There is a difference, however, between help given by a uterine brother and that given by a relative on the mother's side or an affine—a brother does not expect to be repaid but help from other categories of relative becomes converted into a marriage bond or has to be repaid. The close bond between uterine brothers is indicated in the saying 'uterine brothers share even the head of a locust'.

Each 'house' is distinguished, then, from that of other wives of the husband by its cattle-links and obligations to the wife's side of the family (and later the daughters' husbands' families) and by dependence on ancestors on the mother's (i.e., wife's) side in addition to those on the father's side.

In the case of preferential marriage, too, the 'house' is all-important. Here, in contrast to marriage with strangers where the boy's family initiates negotiations, the first approach is usually made by the girl's people who bring the matter in the first instance to their sister, the woman of the 'house' concerned. Thus, for example, when Dumedi obtained cattle from the marriage of his eldest daughter by his first wife (a mother's brother's daughter) her people approached his mother

given to the son of deceased's youngest wife who had deserted him; two goats were killed for the widow of the deceased's eldest son by his first wife when she came from Johannesburg to pay a visit of condolence. Deceased's field was a *leshupa*, a site of their previous village, and as is the custom with such a field, was divided between his wives. His mealies were equally divided between all his wives, his own daughters who were present at the ceremony also receiving some. In the case of Mathekha, all his cattle were given by the *khadi* (his sister) to his eldest son by his chief wife, a man who was a prominent councillor of the queen. It was understood they would be used for helping his brothers and half-brothers to marry. The old man's blankets and money were divided among all his children, the elder ones receiving £1 10s. 0d., the smaller ones only 10s. The wives of a deceased man if they are still of childbearing age are allocated to his brothers or, in the case of a very young wife, sometimes to the chief son and heir. It is his responsibility to hold the family together after the death of his father. The division of the property is made on the day of purification from mourning (*khitshila*) about a year after the death when all the relatives have gathered together. The person responsible for the division of the inheritance in property and wives is the eldest uterine sister of the deceased who acts in consultation with her sisters, especially the cattle-linked sister of the deceased. If there is no uterine sister the deceased's eldest daughter takes her place. She will act in consultation with her father's brother if one is still alive. In allocating wives some consideration is generally given to the wishes of the parties concerned.

When the heir is a minor, a brother of the deceased, usually the one who inherits the mother of the heir, may be chosen to act as regent. But he must be careful to act only in consultation with the *khadi*. In many instances in the case of the death of a district head when the *khadi* (sister of deceased) is old or a widow and free to leave her husband's homestead she may herself come to rule in her brother's village. When M. died, the son of his chief wife was still a child so his uterine sister, a widow, came to rule, while the younger half-brother of the deceased returned from another area where he had been living to set up his village near by in order to raise seed to his half-brother by the chief wife and help his half-sister by conducting

5:Krige E-5 (1936-1938,1961-1962) 1964
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woman, K, has, during her husband's prolonged absence in a labour centre, moved away from her fellow wives into another district in order to be near her married daughter. She lives in a small homestead with her married son, who is absent doing migrant labour, and her other children. In contrast to this is the homestead of a neighbour of hers who has five wives and

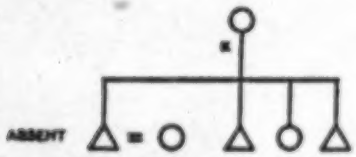

FIG. 5. Composition of a very small homestead.

whose ten brothers together with their wives and children still live with him in the homestead—a total of sixty-eight inmates (twenty-nine adults, thirty-nine children). Of these three married and two unmarried men are away doing migrant labour.

The domestic group indicated in Figure 6 originally lived in one homestead.

On A's death his chief son, B, inherited his youngest wife (No. 3) who as yet had no children. They all moved out of the old homestead, the sons (B and D) of A's two elder wives

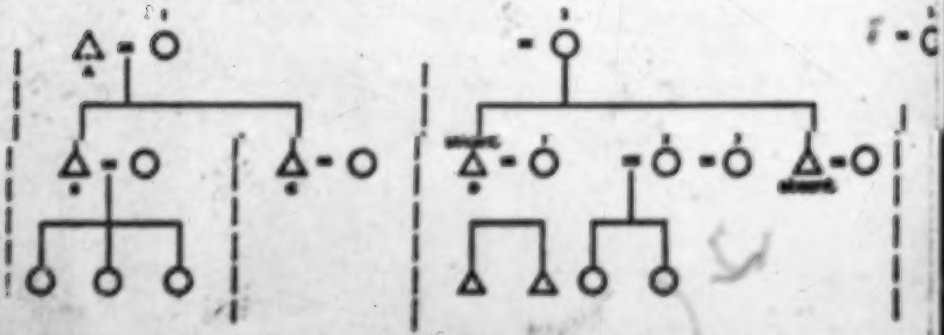

FIG. 6. Segmentation of a homestead on 'house' lines.

building separate homesteads next to one another, where I found them in 1938. The women in the homestead of D considered themselves part of the homestead of A and in the

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Conclusion

182 421 571 Emerging clearly from this study is the fundamental role of property in maintaining the distinctive features of Lobedu social structure. The scarcity of cattle among the Lobedu and the fact that they play little part in subsistence, coupled with an attitude to property which makes its accumulation of little interest and in which economic aspects of property are not always clearly distinguished from the social relationships it creates and maintains—all these factors make for a social system in which the main function of cattle is their use as bride-price and in which women can be used in quasi-economic transactions without their status being in any way depressed thereby.

● 575 602 The independence of the 'house', a basic feature of the Lobedu lineage, likewise rests upon property, a husband being subject to strong sanctions to respect the economic independence of each house as against other similar units. Both husband and wife have an interest in the development of the 'house' as an entity. From the point of view of the husband each house, besides increasing his following and adding to his prestige, also adds to the number and strength of his relations with affines upon whom he can count for economic help and as friends and allies. '*Ba djealane ka ba khenane*—people who marry one another are people who agree', it is said when a man has the support of his affines. To the wife her 'house' is a means of personal fulfilment and advancement. She has considerable say over the property of her 'house'; everything she does for its advancement is for the benefit of her own sons, its heirs; the bride-price of her daughters ensures an old age free from arduous toil, while the marriage of her sons brings in addition the prestige and control that a mother has in the households of her sons and their wives. The 'house' is the most important unit in the structure of the husband's lineage yet at the same time has strong economic and social links with the wife's family.

582 602 An important principle in the social structure is preferential marriage between the son of a sister and the daughter of her uterine brother who has used her bride-price. This form of marriage and the moral right of a sister to a daughter-in-law from the 'house' established by her marriage cattle are on the

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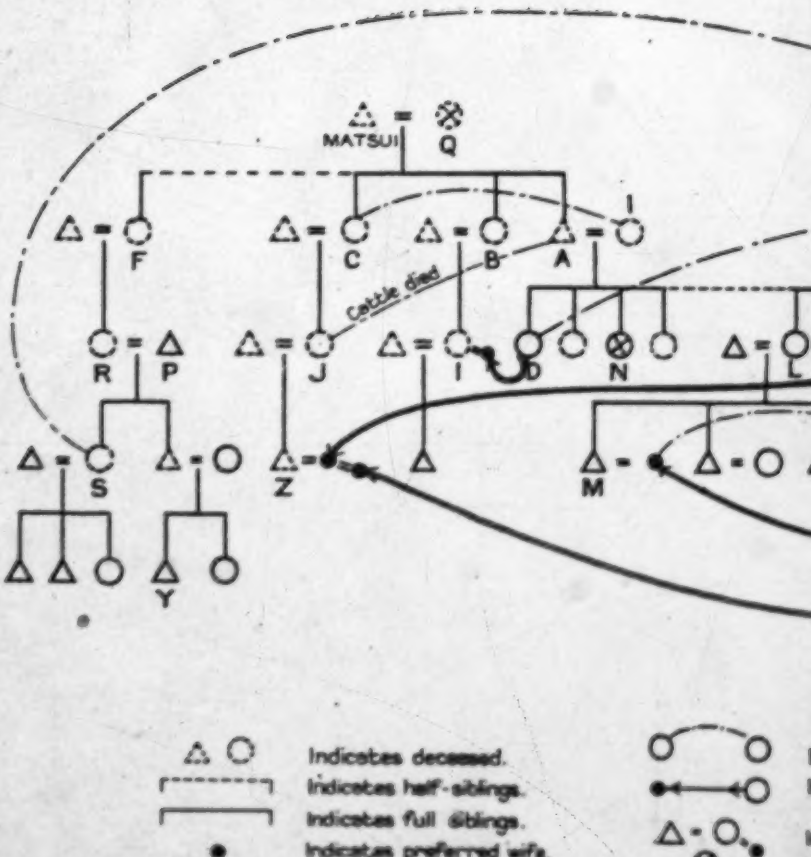

Indicates deceased.
Indicates half-siblings.
Indicates full siblings.
Indicates preferred wife.

[p. 192-A]

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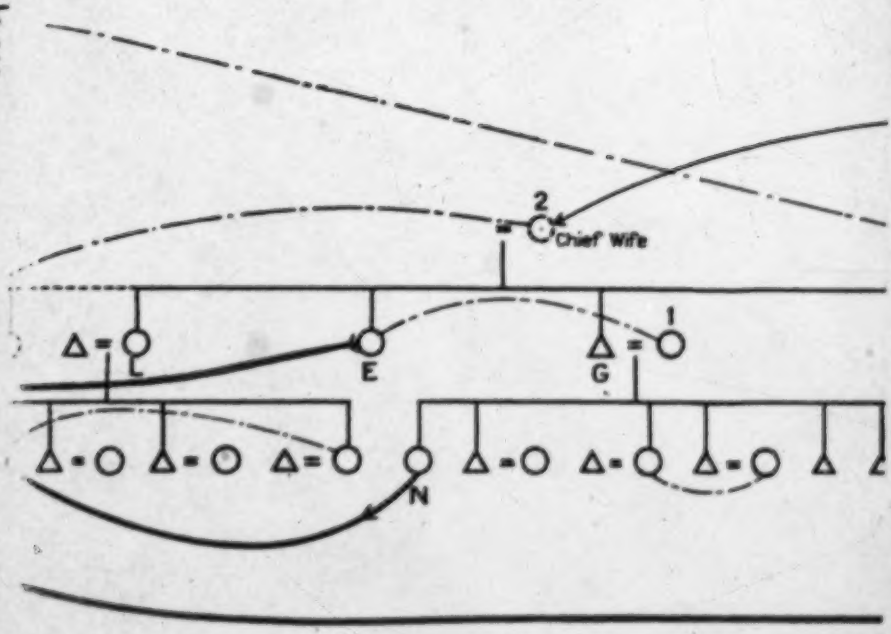

Indicates cattle-link between a wife and the husband's female relative with

Indicates passage of a women in marriage. Single lines denote incoming wives
Double lines denote outgoing females marrying a father's sister or her de

Indicates women marriage of a girl with a married female relation.

Indicates a woman who is or has been a motanoni ('wife') of the queen.

[p. 192-B]

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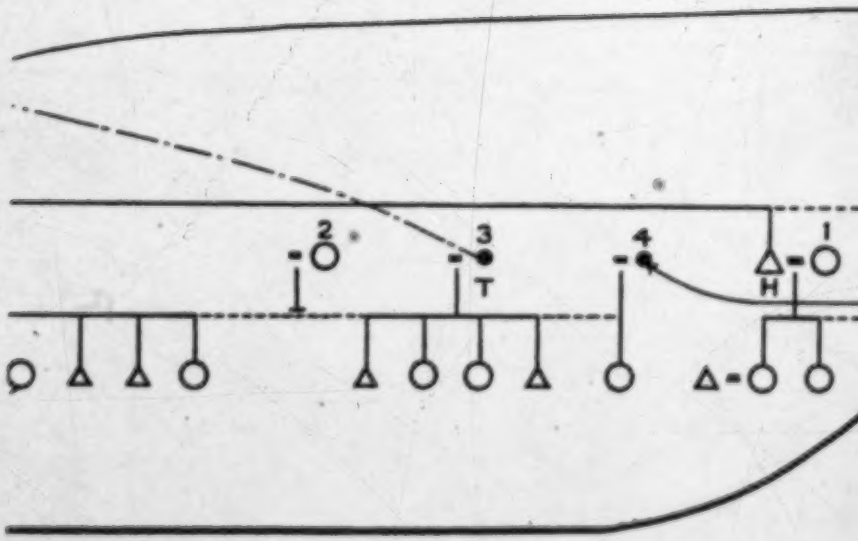

relative with whose cattle she was acquired.
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FIG. 9. Preferential marriages and cattle links in a lin

[p.192-C]

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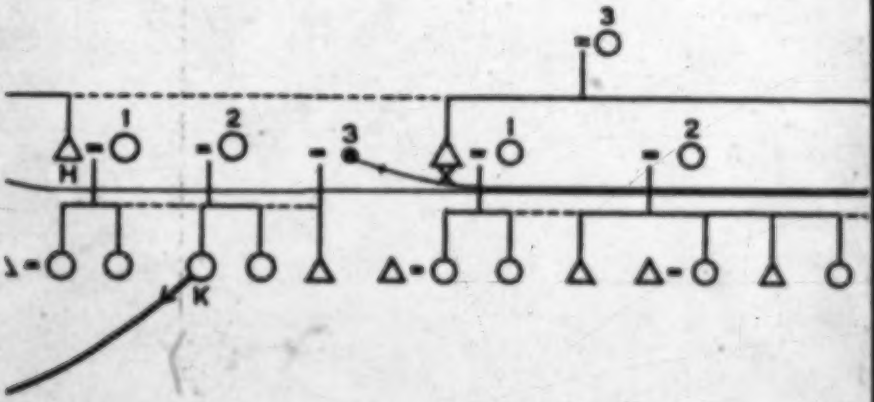

• links in a lineage-segment.

[p. 182-3]

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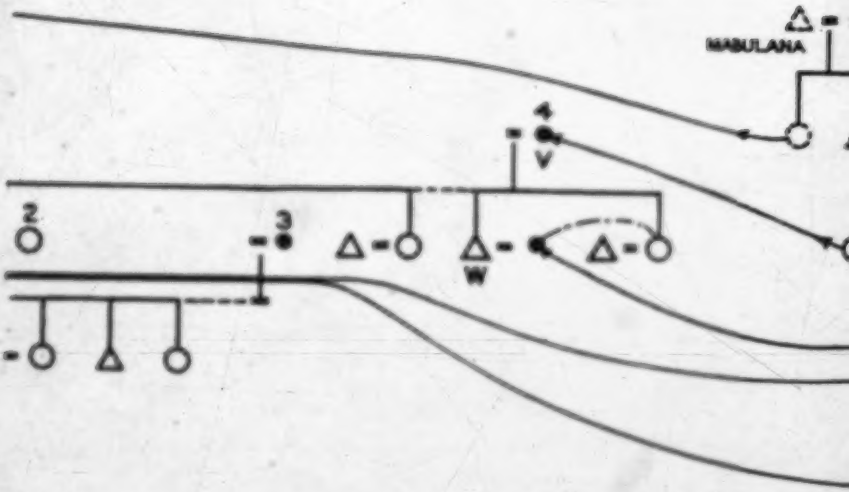

[q. 192-E]

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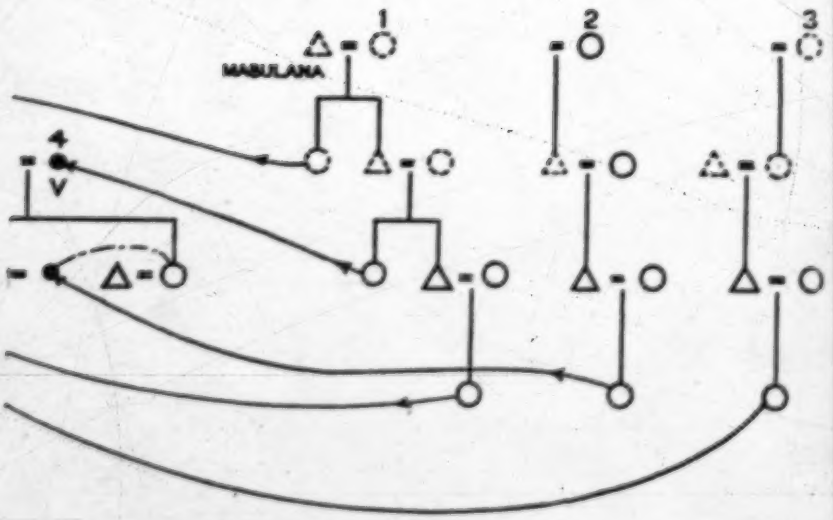

[G.192-F]

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LOBEDU PROPERTY, MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

APPENDIX I

THE manner in which many of the characteristics of Lobedu marriage arrangements operate in practice is illustrated in the case of the lineage segment of A and his descendants set out in Figure 9. The arrows in the diagram all represent the passage of women in preferential marriage from their parental home to that of their husband: single arrows indicate women of the mother's brother's family (i.e., the Mabulanas) who have married into A's lineage (Matsui); double arrows indicate the departure of women of A's lineage to marry at their father's sister's. The following are points to be noted:

(a) The tendency for Lobedu polygynists to marry more than one wife from the same family is seen in Figure 9 in A's marriage to his fourth wife who was his second wife's brother's daughter.

(b) The manner in which cross-cousin marriage perpetuates links with the wife's kin down the generations is illustrated by the marriages of A's sons G, H, W and X. G's fourth wife, H's third wife and W's first wife all come from the same lineage, that of their mothers (A's second and fourth wives). A's son X's third wife is also his uterine cross-cousin but it was not practicable to indicate her family of origin also in the diagram.

(c) Besides reinforcing links with the maternal kin, mother's brother's daughter marriage serves also to knit together descendants of a man and his sisters. The bonds between A and his sisters B and C have been kept alive over a span of two generations of their descendants by the marriage of A's daughter D to I (daughter of his sister B) as indicated by the double arrow in Figure 9, and the marriage of A's daughter E to Z (son of J, and grandson of A's sister, C). Similarly G's daughter N by his first wife is married to the son (M) of his sister L (see double arrows), and H's daughter K is married to her father's sister E, widow of Z, a marriage which took place in 1961.

(d) The part played by cattle links in ensuring preferential marriage is also illustrated in the diagram; but it is clear too that children of brother and sister who are *not* cattle-linked often also marry one another. Z married E because of cattle-links two generations above him as is explained below. But when E grew old and needed a 'wife' G had no suitable daughter; so H's daughter K 'married' her. Cattle-links also did not account for the marriage of A's daughter, D, to his sister I, nor of G's daughter N to his sister L's son M. These indicate the tremendous value attached to maintaining links with married sisters. The reasons for the marriage of